3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

slaves, kitchens, and wells. The oasis depression was studded with date palms and just outside the main entrance to the village were small irrigated gardens and wind-mills. The people had to use the brackish water for ordinary purposes, but sufficient fresh water for tea was obtained from infrequent showers by hollowing out cisterns in the rocks at the top of the western escarpment of the oasis.

The Grand Sanusi was not only a very learned man and a writer of distinction but also a bibliophile with a fine library of some 8,000 volumes,[1] mostly works on Islamic law and jurisprudence, mysticism, philosophy, history, koranic exegesis, poetry, and astronomy and astrology. Round him were many men capable of making good use of this substantial library. Indeed, it would have been difficult to have found anywhere in the Islamic world at that time, outside Cairo, a circle of better scholars. Poetry was one of the arts most cultivated at the oasis and I have been told by Arabs that it reached a high level of excellence. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman, himself a poet, wrote that at Jaghbub one meets 'literary men of distinction, whose writings eclipse those of the poets of Iraq and of Andalousia'.[2]

The whole community at Jaghbub may have numbered round about 1,000, but it is not possible to make more than a guess at the figure. As the oasis produces little except dates, the supply problem must have been considerable, and we know that the Grand Sanusi kept herds of camels to the west of the oasis, where there is scrub grazing, and at al-'Azziyyat, to transport supplies from the coast. The community lived very largely on the surplus revenues, mostly goods in kind, sent annually by all the zawiyas of Cyrenaica.

The community was centred round the University. It was, in fact, almost purely a University society, and its importance as such in the history of the Sanusiya Order is very considerable. Here, under his personal supervision and the supervision of his disciples, far from worldly distractions, the Grand Sanusi was able to train the future leaders of the Order. The Shaikhs of the lodges of the Order were appointed by him from among his intimate circle of disciples, many of whom had followed him

[1] Duveyrier, op. cit., p. 24; Muhammad bin 'Uthman, op. cit., p. 88; Sir Richard Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah* (Memorial Edition), 1893, vol. ii, pp. 24–5.

[2] Op. cit., p. 88.